THE

SPEECH

OF THE

Honble Charles James FOX;

Delivered at WESTMINSTER, on *Wednesday*, *February*, 2, 1780; on the Reduction of SINECURE PLACES, and UNMERITED PENSIONS.

With a List of the Gentlemen chose on the COMMITTEE.

To which is added the

SPEECH

OF

THOMAS DAY, Esq.

As delivered to the

Freeholders of *Essex*, at *Chelmsford*.

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AT a numerous and reſpectable meeting of the inhabitants of the City and Liberty of Weſtminſter, to take into conſiderati n the expenditure of the public money, &c. Mr. Fox by the unanimous voice of the aſſembly being called to the chair, Mr. SAWBRIDGE opened the buſineſs, and recommended the meeting to adopt the petition of the County of York; which was ſeconded by Mr. WILKES, who alſo moved, that a committee be appointed to prepare a plan of an aſſociation, and correſpondence, for ſupporting their petition.— It was reſolved that the following Noblemen and Gentlemen compoſe the ſaid committee.

Duke of Portland
Lord Temple
Lord Egremont
Lord Cholmondeley
Lord Derby
Lord Craven
Lord George Cavendiſh
Lord King
Mr. James Grenville
Mr. Turner
Mr- Fox
Mr. Wilkes
Lord Richard Cavendiſh
Sir Charles Davers
Col. Barre
Lord Edward Bentinck
Mr. Rd. Hippeſley Coxe
Lord Frederick Cavendiſh
Rt. Hon. T. Townſhend
Mr. Wood
Mr. Byng
Col. Fitzpatrick
Mr. Burke
Ld. Geo. H. Cavendiſh
Lord Bulkley
Mr. Vardy
Mr. J. Brett
Mr. Tyſſen
Mr. Wood, jun.
Mr. Churchill
Lord Surrey
Mr. W. Stort
Mr. Reynolds
Mr. Hayes
Mr. Arthington
Mr. John Jennings
Mr. Richards
Mr. Watkins
Mr. Blair
Mr. Hume
Mr. Buſh
Mr. Harvey
Mr. Vincent
Mr. Payne
Mr. B. Wood
Mr. Beckford
Mr. Marſank
Mr. Frith
Mr. Glanvill
Sir Francis Vincent

Sir

Sir Robert Clayton
Sir Robert Bernard
Gen. Burgoyne
Mr. Crewe
Mr. Sawbridge
Lord John Cavendiſh
Sir Harry Fetherſton
Mr. Hunt
Sir John Ramſden
Mr. Shuttleworth
Sir Charles Bunbury
Earl Verney
Mr. Hopkins
Sir W. Middleton
Sir Cecil Wray
Sir Thomas Frankland
Sir Joſeph Mawbey
Mr. W. Hartley
Mr. Baker
Mr. Colhoun
Mr. Blakiſton
Dr. John Jebb
Mr. Sheridan
Mr. Samuel Hartley
Mr. Topham Beauclerk
Mr. Wallinger
Mr. Phillimore
Mr. Greive
Mr. Crompton, Jun.
Mr. Almon
Mr. Frogatt
Mr. Byron
Sir W. Gibbons
Mr. Adair
Mr. Adair, of Pall-mall
Mr. Loyd
Mr. Duckett
Mr. Brackenbury
Mr. Gibbord
Mr. Geo. Jennings
Mr. Harrop
Mr. Taſter
Mr. Burton
Mr. Fadgate
Mr. Huſſey
Mr. Harris
Mr. Alderman Burnell
Mr. Minier
Mr. Gray
Mr. James Ellis
Mr. Miles
Mr. Holbrook
Mr, Townley Ward
Hon. Thomas Grenville

Mr. Sawbridge then came forward, and requeſted the meeting to appoint a gentleman to deliver their petition to the Houſe of Commons: Mr. Fox was in conſequence unanimouſly called for, and appointed for that purpoſe; when he addreſſed the aſſembly in the following ſpeech.

THE

THE SPEECH OF THE Honble Charles James FOX;

Delivered at WESTMINSTER, on *Wedneſday, Febuary* 2, 1780; on the Reduction of SINECURE PLACES, and UNMERITED PENSIONS.

THAT he never received any command with ſo much heartfelt ſatisfaction, as he did the orders of that meeting, to preſent their petition to Parliament. The unanimous determination of ſo numerous a body of men, to whom corruption had not yet extended, had in itſelf a reverence and reſpect that would make it ſucceſsful, and he felt himſelf particularly honoured in being choſen, on this ſolemn occaſion, to expreſs to the Houſe of Commons what they conceived to be neceſſary, and what they expected to be done.--Being thus honoured with the commands of the meeting, he could not reſiſt the temptation which he felt, to ſay a few words on the ſubjects of their grievances, in addition to what had been ſo ably and properly urged by the two gentlemen who

had already ſpoken. If he were to enumerate all the inſtances, in which the preſent adminiſtration had laviſhed the public money, and on which they had refuſed to give the ſmalleſt account, he knew, that he ſhould exhauſt the patience of the meeting.

He could only aſſure them, on the word of an active Member of Parliament, who for ten years together, had given unremitting attention to their conduct, that there was apparent in every tranſaction, the moſt ſhameful and infamous waſte—the moſt unparallelled miſapplication of the public treaſure: that money was granted from year to year with the moſt culpable extravagance on the part of the Parliament, and that if any member was officious enough to requeſt that the nation might be informed for what purpoſe the money was wanted, to what it had been applied, and that vouchers for the expenditure ſhould be produced; they were treated with the moſt haughty contempt, and given to underſtand, that it was enough for Parliament to know that the money which was required had been ſpent—that perhaps it would be accounted for ſome time—perhaps fourteen or fifteen years hence—perhaps never. In a hundred inſtances. this had been the anſwer; which he, perſonally, among other officious enquirers into the public expenditure, had received, To enumerate them all would be impoſſible; but he would juſt mention one, for one was as good as a hundred.

A charge of 60,000l. was made for preſents to Indians, which was ſtated to have been paid into the hands of the ſuperintendant. The preſents prineipally conſiſted of *razors* and *Jews-harps*.—When it was declared in the Houſe of Commons, that

that there was ſomething peculiarly aſtoniſhing in this article, and when the Miniſter was aſked how it came to have ariſen, he confeſſed, that he was himſelf aſtoniſhed at its bulk, and could not comprehend how it had amounted to ſo enormous a ſum. Let us then, ſaid the gentlemen on his ſide of the Houſe, put off the payment at leaſt for a time, till we enquire how it was expended. No, replies the Miniſter, that we cannot do: however it may have ariſen, the money muſt be granted, for it is already paid.—Produce the vouchers, then, of its expenditure.—No, replies he, that is impoſſible; they are not yet come to hand.—When will they come to hand?—I know not; but at ſartheſt they will be complete in fourteen or fifteen years. This, ſays the honourable gentlemen, is the language of the Miniſter on all occaſions; and to ſuch a pitch of ſervility are we reduced, that we bear it. The money that the people had ſubmitted to pay, becauſe they believed it to be deſigned for public ſervice, made its way into the pockets of their repreſentatives, and hired a troop of mercenary members to vote away ſtill more.

The Miniſtry had not at this time the concurence of any one man in the kingdom, from conſcious integrity. "Were you, gentlemen," ſays he, "to aſk every member, as he paſſes through this hall to his place, what he thought of the meaſures, and what of the honeſty and wiſdom of Miniſters? he would tell you that he deteſted and deſpiſed them; and yet it is more than two to one that the very ſame member ſhould be conducted out of the houſe, by the nod of authority, to vote on whatever queſtion the Miniſter might incline." That corruption, which they had been enabled, through the profligacy of Parliament, to render ſo univerſal

ſal, contained within itſelf the baleful ſource of its own continuance; it daily and hourly enlarged the influence of the Crown, and it was ſo much the more dangerous, becauſe, though beneath the forms of the conſtitution, it diſcharged its attacks upon the conſtitution with more ſecurity. It was therefore high time that the people ſhould unite in one great national plan of common ſalvation.—Nothing but the efforts of the people, the legal and conſtitutional aſſociations of the people at large, could reſcue this devoted country, at this moment, from the power of influence. That this was conſtitutional was undoubted, for what was the nature of the government of this country—King, Lords, and people—for the Houſe of Commons is no more than the delegate, the repreſentative of the people who have entruſted for a time their power, their rights, their intereſts in their hands. If that delegated body fails in the execution of their truſt, if they abandon the intereſts of their conſtituents, they are no more the repreſentative of the people—they are the inſtruments of the Crown. The queſtion was, whether they had failed in the execution of their duty—whether they had reached the point of diſtinction between being the repreſentative of the people, and the inſtrument of the Crown—or whether they had paſt it. He would not ſay that they had—But if they refuſed to grant the purpoſe of the preſent petition; if they rejected meaſures of œconomy—from that moment they paſt the line—from that moment they ceaſed to be the repreſentative of the people: and it was legal, conſtitutional, and neceſſary, for the people to aſſume that truſt which their delegates had thrown off. This was the univerſal ſenſe of the nation—No man could be ſo depraved, ſo

blinded

blinded by faction, ſo ignorant of the conſtitution, as to deny the doctrine.

The adherents of the preſent Miniſtry may call it unconſtitutional ;—the men who enjoy thoſe extravagant emoluments, and unmerited penſions, may ſay that it is unconſtitutional to be deprived of them. They may ſay this in holes and corners; but they dare not boldly come forward at the public meetings, and avow their aſſertions. Proteſts may be contrived; as ſenſeleſs as they are impudent, by the men who are robbing the public, in the preſent day of general deſpondency and diſtreſs, in their ſecret cabals, and they may be ſent to hedge-alehouſes to be ſigned by their needy dependants, but they dare not meet the people of England fairly, and ſupport their claims and pretenſions to thoſe places, either by argument or proof. Perhaps you, Gentlemen, will afterwards hear of a perſon who poſſeſſes one of the moſt uſeleſs of thoſe places ; perhaps, he ſaid, he meant the Lord Lieutenant of the county, ſtriving to obtrude an oppoſition to the proceedings of this day, and daring to ſay, that the ſenſe of the electors was not fully contained in your reſolutions. To ſuch inſignificant pretenſions you know how to behave. You meet in the eyes of all the world, and declare your ſenſe of our public ſituation like men and citizens.

But, perhaps, it may be ſaid, that " theſe petitions lead to anarchy and confuſion." They do not, they lead to the contrary; they tend to prevent anarchy and confuſion ; they tend to prevent the fall of this Empire; to reſtore us to harmony, order, and to peace, by vigour exertion, and ſucceſs. But ſay they " this is not a time for ſtraitening the hands of Government." Is this to ſtraiten the hands of Government? œconomy is giving new ſupplies to Government. All that can be

ſaved

ſaved from the ſink of corruption, will be applied to the ſervice of the State, will add new ſtrength to our arms, and enable us to maintain that unequal conflict in which we are engaged. But, ſay they, "this is not a time for theſe complaints; this is not a time for this reformation." What! is not the moment of neceſſity the time of relief? is not the moment when we are moſt hardly preſſed for ſupplies, the moment for œconomy? undoubtedly it is. We now feel our wants; we are in need of every aid that ingenuity can invent; we are in need of all the money that can be raiſed. This would, indeed, be an unjuſtifiable meaſure, if we were contriving how to burthen the people with more taxes, but we are contriving to ſupply the wants and neceſſities of the ſtate, not by additional impoſitions on the people, but by a frugal application of what we already poſſeſs. But ſay they, "this is a reform originating from men who never attempted it themſelves when they poſſeſſed the power; Whigs as well as Tories have been equally guilty." In this charge there is ſome foundation, but no argument. True, the calamity has advanced to this moment unredreſſed, but till this moment it was never ſo loudly felt, nor ſo clearly underſtood. The calamity was never ſo enormous; it was never before carried to ſuch a height. When ſucceſs crowns every effort of a ſtate, and when conqueſt makes the people glorious and happy, they are not apt to enquire into the expenditure of the public money; they give with pleaſure, becauſe what they give, though it may not be ſpent with œconomy, yet procures them new territory and renown.

But when defeat, ſhame. and diſmay purſues them in every quarter; when their efforts grow weak

weak and languid, in proportion as their expences increaſe, they are led by curioſity, as well as concern, to enquire into the expenditure of the public money. It is however indecent in them to charge the character of the ever memorable Earl of Chatham with the only blemiſh that can be diſcovered in his character, without at the ſame time aſſociating with his extravagance, his wiſdom, his exertions, and, above all, his ſucceſs.

But this is the manner in which the preſent adminiſtration and their friends defend themſelves. In former times, when a miniſter was attacked, his friends uſed to defend him by enumerating the merits he poſſeſſed; but now the friends (or rather the adherents, for friends they have none) of the preſent miniſtry abandon that ground; they attempt not to ſay that they are wiſe, capable, virtuous, zealous, or vigilant; they give them up to the accuſations of the people, but ſtill they exclaim, their enemies are as bad. On this they reſt all their defence, and thus they endeavour to blacken human nature, to throw calumny on mankind in general, and in the conſciouſneſs of their own deformity, to reduce all others to their own ſtandard.

Having ſaid ſo much, the honourable gentleman obſerved, he would but add a few words of the neceſſity of national exertion at this moment. The people knew well the origin of monarchy. It was the price which gratitude induced nations to pay men of extraordinary heroiſm and virtue, for ſecuring them from ſlavery, for extending, or for planting, and eſtabliſhing their fame, or for other eminent actions of a ſimilar nature. This was the ſtring from which kingly authority was in general derived; and what gratitude at firſt produced, preſcription, habit,

happineſs

neſs in ſome inſtances, and weakneſs in others, continued and maintained. Nations were excuſed who conferred royalty on the man who gave them empire: but what would that people ſuffer in the annals of time, who permitted themſelves to be enſlaved in a reign not immortalized by enterpriſe and glory? They would have nothing to plead in their excuſe but tameneſs, ſervility and corruption. If the value of liberty was unknown; if its nature was neither defined nor underſtood, they would have ignorance to plead in their favour, and they would be pitied, not condemned: but having every advantage of information and ſcience, liberality, and the ſenſe of its worth; nay, having the example before their eyes of what manly reſiſtance would produce, they would be univerſally deteſted, and infamy would be added to ruin.

Nothing but the determined reſolutions of the people, the temperate and firm deciſions of Engliſhmen, united in one plan, and preſſing to one point could ſave them. Thus united, thus exerting themſelves, no Prince however obſtinate, no Parliament however venal, could oppoſe or reſiſt them. If they called to mind the treatment they had received, the manner in which they had been loaded with taxes, while in the midſt of public calamity and public want; the revenue of the Sovereign was increaſed with 100,000 a year, and he was the only perſon whoſe eſtate was not to ſuffer from the blunders and the incapacity of his miniſters; if they called to mind this, they would know that from ſuch a miniſtry nothing was to be expected but miſery and ruin. The people muſt be the miniſters of their own deliverance, and the road to it was open. They had ſeen the effect of manly reſolution. Their brethren in America, and their brethren in Ireland had

had taught them how to act when bad men forced them to feel. Are we not born from the ſame original? Are we not poſſeſſed of equal veneration for our lives and liberties? Does not the blood flow as freely in our veins? Have we not, like them, received educations that inſpire us with a contempt of life, when freedom is in danger? Have not our fathers, as well as theirs, fought and bled for their rights, and tranſmitted them to us in ſacred confidence? And ſhall not we then be equally ready in the moment of alarm to maintain that freedom in which we were born? Shall the heart of the empire be tame and lifeleſs, when the limbs are in activity and motion? NO. He did not fear it. He did not fear that corruption had extended its enervations ſo far as to weaken the ſinews or deſtroy the ſenſibility of the body of the people.

Let them not, ſays he, be deterred by the word ASSOCIATION. There is nothing unconſtitutional in the term. Let them recollect the nature of the aſſociation that took place on the perſecution of his friend on his right hand (Mr. Wilkes) and the event, and aſſure themſelves, that with Aſſociations they had it always in their power to maintain the independence in which they were born, and to compel the body whom they had entruſted with their rights to do them juſtice; but without Aſſociation they muſt fall a ſacrifice to that corruption which had given the Crown an influence unknown to any former period in our hiſtory. Permit this influence to encreaſe, and the country will be enſlaved; deſtroy it and the Engliſh conſtitution could never be overthrown.

In theſe propoſed meaſures, ſo neceſſary to our own intereſt and ſalvation, you will be told that your *aſſociating* in the preſent inſtance, has the ap-

 pearance

pearance of controlling Parliament, who have always deemed it an infringement on their privileges, for the ſubject to *interfere* in the impoſition or regulation of taxes. Happy had it been for this country, fortunate and honourable had it been for us all, if Parliament had liſtened in time to the *interfering* voice of America, on the ſubject of taxation, and had ſuffered itſelf to be *controlled* by the temperate admonitions of that people; inſtead of *anarchy*, *confuſion* and *inſurrection*, we ſhould then have poſſeſſed the dominion of that country, and have been the grateful ſpectators, at this hour, of *peace*, *order*, and *good government*, throughout the empire! But what is there in the word *Aſſociation* to alarm or terrify an honeſt ear?

We have heard, Gentlemen, of *aſſociations* not only inoffenſive, but highly grateful to the very men, who now for the purpoſe of miſleading you, affect to be alarmed, and ſtartle at the ſound. We have heard a great deal of the *aſſociated livery*, the effects of whoſe *aſſociation* were ſeverely felt by my honourable friend (Mr. Wilkes) without a murmur of diſcontent on the part of our preſent opponents; and yet its views are evidently more extenſive, and not more laudable than the oppreſſion and perſecution of that gentleman, for they ſtill continue that *aſſociation*, over which his eminent ſervices, his well-earned popularity, and the circumſtances of the times have given him a compleat and glorious triumph. But when arguments of terror fail, there is a never-failing topic with which they work on public credulity, to diſhearten you, and to diſcourage every attempt at reformation. They tell you, that the perſons who court your confidence, and call upon you for aſſiſtance, are ſwayed by ſelf, or actuated by the powerful impulſe of ambition. But do they give you any proofs of the truth of this

bold,

bold, unwarranted allegation, an allegation which, if it were juſt, might truly ſum up the meaſure of your miſery, and conſign you hopeleſs and acquieſcent to deſpair and ſlavery.

Is there then no virtue, no integrity left amongſt you? Conſult your own honeſt hearts, and give the baſe calumniator, who vilifies the human ſpecies, and dares to inſult you perſonally, the anſwer he deſerves. But, gentlemen, give me leave to obſerve, that facts ſtand directly in oppoſition to his unworthy charge, as far as relates to the conduct of thoſe men whom they abuſe with unremitting induſtry and rancour, becauſe they profeſs themſelves your friends, and are likely to riſe and ſtand high in your opinion; I mean the Minority, or as they are ſometimes called the oppoſition in Parliament. Is it a proof of their ſelfiſhneſs and want of principle, that for a ſeries of years they have uniformly, and in every part of it combated that ſyſtem, which has confeſſedly by all men, brought this country into a war of complicated miſchief and misfortune, replete with diſtreſs, and deſtitute of glory: in which unequal ſtruggle, they have not only ſtood oppoſed to the power and inclinations of the Crown, and its Miniſters, an immenſe and hitherto unknown majority in Parliament, but have even dared, in ſupport of their opinions, to face the prejudice of a vaſt body of the people, under the fair hope and confidence that ſooner or later (may it not prove too late) error muſt give way to truth, and juſtice be done to the purity of their intentions.

But to what extent did even this oppoſition go? not to clog the wheels of Government, or to the obſtruction of meaſures adopted by the Legiſlature; Miniſters had the moſt ample ſupplies, the moſt unbounded range for their profuſion; their weapons

of

of oppoſition were plain arguments of admonition, diligently, but temperately uſed, for the happineſs and welfare of the country, and for the maintenance of which, they had almoſt all of them in turn foregone the poſſeſſion of preſent emoluments, and repeatedly refuſed the actual proffers of intereſt and ambition. And what is their preſent conduct? Is not the propoſal now ſubmitted to you an unequivocal demonſtration of their diſintereſtedneſs and zeal to ſerve you? But I wiſh you to diveſt yourſelves of any partiality or predilection for any ſet of men; *judge of us as we* continue to act; view us with a jealous eye; I admire the caution; you will make us more attentive to our duty, and render your good opinion and confidence of higher eſtimation.—We aſk you not for favour, or an implicit confidence; we look for juſtice, and are certain of having juſtice done to us by an honeſt and a wiſe people, in ſpite of all the arts of malice and miſrepreſentation. Let your cenſure, the ſevereſt puniſhment, attend us, when we are falſe to, or deſert your intereſts; whilſt our conduct remains pure, diſintereſted, and beyond a fair ſuſpicion, we claim your approbation, and your confidence; you will not wait *ſolicitations*, you will beſtow it, and we feel it, as our *right*.

THE

THE SPEECH OF THOMAS DAY, Esq.

HAVING taken a very comprehensive view of the national grievances, and the proposed application to the House of Commons. With respect to the latter, he observed that the very right which they were then about to exercise, the right which every people retaining a shadow of liberty, and even many that are totally enslaved possess, that of exposing their grievances to their rulers, had been represented as seditious, and prefatory to rebellion. "It is, indeed, (he said) a melancholy truth, that the complaints and sufferings of the people are so little attended to by their rulers, that most civil commotions have been preceded by repeated murmurs and remonstrances. These, when treated with that open and avowed contempt with which the currupt adherents of a court are always ready to receive them, have sometimes, like repelled humours, produced maladies of a more difficult cure. But let the history of mankind determine, whether the fault of the species be too patient a tameness, or too irritable a spirit of opposition. Let Europe, Asia, Africa, and all America, except that part which is now in

in open rebellion, decide the queſtion, and ſhew a ſingle nation which is not already fallen, or on the brink of hopeleſs deſpotiſm.

In our own caſe to doubt the right of petitioning is to betray a manifeſt ignorance of our hiſtory and conſtitution. It is a right which has been uniformly exerciſed, and is expreſſly contained in that great record of Engliſh liberties, the *petition of right*; and as there is no act of Britiſh Parliament, which has yet reſcinded that important charter, or veſted the whole legiſlature of this kingdom, like that of Boſton, or Quebec, in the crown, I hope we may be yet allowed to quote it as an authority. The tyrant who diverted his favorites and courtiers with the cries of wretches expiring in torments, was too well acquainted with human nature to endeavour to repreſs their groans, though his royal inſenſibility could make them a ſubject of his ſport. Would our Governors refine upon the example, and when a whole ſuffering people can endure no longer, bid them expire in ſilence. This is a reſpect which Providence itſelf does not require, ſince we are enjoined to expreſs our wiſhes and our wants; but uſurpers generally extend their arrogance beyond the common pride of legal monarchs, and therefore ſhould an earthly aſſembly aſpire to that omnipotence which belongs to the Divinity alone, I ſhould not wonder, if they uſed their power like the Prince of Darkneſs.—But this is no longer an hour to trifle with our ſituation, the complexion of the times admits not of negligence or tameneſs; to wave our rights through courteſy, or to reſign them through weakneſs; many have been already loſt, many more are perhaps devoted; high ſighted tyranny hovers over the whole, and marks her victims by lot, perhaps

perhaps like the miſerable Greeks encloſed in the Cyclops den, our hope is not to eſcape, but only to fall the laſt.

Taking notice of our preſent ſituation, he repreſented it in the nigheſt degree alarming, ſuch as might juſtify any nation, but our own, in yielding to diſpair, contraſting it with that in which we ſtood at the concluſion of the laſt war, he proceeded thus:—" The cloſe of the year 1762, beheld us, advanced to the ſummit of national glory and happineſs; the Britiſh arms were in every part of the globe either unreſiſted or triumphant; the moſt important ſettlements of our enemies were in our hands; their marine and commerce were annihilated, and we had it in our power to have made ſuch a peace as ſhould for a century, at leaſt, have preſerved our ſuperiority at ſea. Whether theſe advantages were obtained or not, I have not now time to enquire. The peace which enſued in 1763, left us an additional debt of ſeventy millions, and many temporary burthens, but with an ability to bear them, which perhaps, no æra had before ſeen—Our manufacturers flouriſhed to an incredible degree; the ſpirit of agriculture was ſo vigorous, that the produce of lands, and their value, augmented with an incredible rapidity; and though our burthens were enormous, the univerſal appearance of induſtry, of opulence and plenty, which pervaded the land, witneſſed, that the reſources of the people were yet unexhauſted. But the appearances were ſhort-lived and tranſitory. The government inſtead of leſſening the national burthens by a prudent and ſteady œconomy, which muſt neceſſarily have produced the deſired effects, choſe to exer-

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ciſe their ingenuity, and open new ſources of affluence by a taxation of the colonies; frightful, that the neceſſity they lay under of purchaſing our manufactures, impoſed an equal neceſſity of paying all the impoſitions with which they were loaded. Mr. Grenville accordingly projected the famous ſtamp act."

Here Mr. Dav gave a ſummary account of all the proceedings between government and the colonies, and continued thus:

"The year 1774 preſents an awful ſpectacle; it is the burſting of that tempeſt, which has, I fear, for ever divided the American continent from her parent ſtate; upon the aſſembling of the Parliament, there were no appearances of that ſpirit of moderation which was ſo neceſſary to abate the mutual animoſity; every thing was dictated by indignation and revenge; the deciſion of that great queſtion, which, for the intereſts of this nation, ſhould have been buried in eternal oblivion, raſhly precipitated, and no choice left but that of open reſiſtance or unconditional ſubmiſſion. There may be, perhaps, ſome gentlemen in this company, who have not peruſed the acts in queſtion; therefore, I will beg leave to read the ſolemn form, by which a country of vaſt extent, abounding in inhabitants, was in an inſtant diſfranchiſed of all its rights, and delivered bound into the hands of its moſt implacable enemies."

[*Here he read a clauſe from the act for the regulation of the government of Maſſachuſet's Bay.*]

"You, gentlemen, are judges, how little men who had offended from zeal for what they thought their liberties, the immediate deſcendants of our own nation, at a period when thoſe flames burned fierceſt at leaſt, if not pureſt, could be expected

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to ſubmit to penalties which would have degraded them below the rank of eaſtern ſlaves. From the feelings which animate your own boſoms, you can allow for the exceſs of virtue in others; I bluſh not at the term; for however erroneous may be their notions, however falſe their claims, they that are capable of offering at the ſhrine of freedom, eaſe, opulence, ſecurity, whatever is moſt dear to human feelings and paſſions, deſerve the eſteem of Engliſhmen. At this æra there was a party in this nation deſerving a better fortune than they have met, which dared to oppoſe the torrent, with which the inconſiderate part of the people was hurried forward into deſtruction. They foretold, with a prophetic ſpirit, every thing which has ſince happened: they conjured the Parliament to pauſe in their dreadful career, and to conſider the petitions which were ſent over from the people and Congreſs of America, ſuing to be heard in their own cauſe: they forewarned you of the difficulty of the conteſt, the blood and treaſure which muſt be laviſhed to reduce your brethren to miniſterial dependence, the uncertainty of ſucceſs, and the hoſtile intentions of France and Spain, which, like concealed ſerpents, only waited the moment when they could ſting with redoubled venom. Yet theſe remonſtrances were anſwered with contempt and diſdain; and their authors treated with every degree of ſcurrility and detraction by an intereſted cabal, who ſcrupled not to ſacrifice the peace and ſafety of an empire to their own ambition. War, therefore, was begun; war, unrelenting and unpitying; carried on with a ſpirit of revenge and deſolation hitherto unknown to this country. Its ſucceſs has been anſwerable to its principles; the Britiſh ſoldiery has never behaved with a more determined valour, yet have all

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their efforts and their valour been alike fruitleſs: they have been baffled by men, whom you were taught to rank among the refuſe of the creation; whom a ſingle regiment was to drive like ſheep from one Savannah to another; and where ſpoils might enrich, but conqueſt never adorn your arms. Our diſgraces began (would to Heaven they had ended) in America; alas! they have been as extenſive, as univerſal as our former glories; and the contraſt is at length compleat. Although the experience of every age and nation has proved, that the only deity acknowledged by Kings and Governments, is their own intereſt and ambition; though France in particular has been the natural, the habitual enemy of this country; though every page of our hiſtory is filled with real or imaginary inſtances of her perfidy, and though war had ſubſided, it was not to be expected ſhe had ſo ſoon forgot her late diſgraces; yet, bleeding with all the wounds we had inflicted, have we implicitly truſted, perhaps, our very exiſtence. It was believed, that ſhe would omit the only opportunity which time had ever produced, and which no time might bring back, of attacking us with advantage and effect; and ſuch was our madneſs and deluſion, that, rather than not wound the breaſt of our offspring, we have bared our own to an enemy.

"France and Spain have entered into the liſts when we were leaſt prepared to reſiſt them, and have thrown their weight into the ſcale, which already preponderated. Since then, freſh clouds of miſery and diſgrace have darkened the whole extent of our horizon, and almoſt extinguiſhed hope itſelf. We have beheld our enemies triumphant in America itſelf, which was to have been the theatre of our conqueſts, the valiant remains of our once-

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victorious armies reduced to moulder away in inactivity; ſo low has been our ſpirit ſunk, ſo much that towering Ambition, which almoſt graſped the empire of the world, extinguiſhed, that there have been more rejoicings made for the bare repulſe of America aſſainants from Britiſh lines, than once attended the defeat of armies, and the deſtructions of fleets. The Ocean, which once acknowledged our ſovereignty, has now ſubmitted to bolder prows; the fleets of France and Spain, which, under the adminiſtration of Lord Chatham, called all the winds of heaven to aid their flight, now purſue our navies, or inſult our ports; and the greateſt merit of a Britiſh commander is, like the Roman Varro, *non deſperaſſe de Republicá*, and to have procaſtinated deſtruction by avoiding an engagement.

"Why ſhould I mix ridicule with misfortune, and ſhew you a bold adventurer circling our ſhores, ſpoiling our commerce, and capturing our ſhips of war; then exhibiting your diſgraces in foreign ports, while a Britiſh Ambaſſador, with all the inſignia of his office, carrying about him the honour of his maſter and the dignity of his nation, ſubmiſively implores, in their name, the aſſiſtance of the Dutch republic, to puniſh the ſucceſsful outrages of a pirate?—Amidſt the crimes and horrors which diſtinguiſhed the laſt century, it was ſome comfort to have been greatly criminal, or to ſubmit to the yoke of a bold uſurper, at whoſe name almoſt the whole univerſe was awed. But what ſhall now conſole us for public ignominy, accompanied with private miſery?—Our rulers are only dreadful to ourſelves, and authors of no misfortune, except to their country. The ſame Palinurus, which has launched our ſhattered veſſels amidſt the ſtorm, ſtill ſlumbers at the

the helm; there is the ſame negligence and ſupineneſs in our councils, attended with a profuſion and rapacity which conqueſt itſelf could not ſupport. Neither the ſucceſsful wars of the Duke of Marlborough, nor the yet more glorious adminiſtration of Lord Chatham, has equalled, by many millions, the expence of looſing thirteen colonies, and the ſovereignty of the ſea——.

" Had this pernicious war been ended laſt Chriſtmas, it would have coſt the nation forty-ſeven millions. If you wiſh to know the glorious effects which have been produced by theſe enormous ſums, you may conſult the operations of laſt ſummer. Notwithſtanding the firſt Lord of the Admiralty publickly deprecated vengeance on his own head, if ever the combined fleets of France and Spain ſhould exceed that of Great Britain, yet in laſt June was Sir Charles Hardy ſent againſt the French and Spaniſh fleets, amounting to ſixty-three ſhips of the line, with no more than ſix and thirty. In the ſame ſpirit was Admiral Byron in the Weſt Indies, with only one and twenty foul ſhips of the line, and one frigate, oppoſed to the fleet of D'Eſtaing, conſiſting of thirty-one clean and well appointed ſhips; and if the event was leſs diſgraceful than might have been expected, it was owing to the valour of the Britiſh ſea-men, which neither inequality of numbers or fortune could diſmay. Mr. Day then expatiated upon the defenceleſs ſituation of Plymouth, when the French Admiral anchored in the Channel, deſtitute of men, of officers, of amunition; its fortifications a pile of ruins, and no human means of making any defence; he added, " perhaps you will think I am deſcribing ſome paltry fiſhing town, which did not deſerve defence; becauſe it could never engage an attack; what then will be your feelings

ings, when you conſider this place is the great bulwark of this iſland, the only remaining hopes of future navies, and that its loſs muſt have terminated the war. Perhaps you may think, that the ſcanty ſupplies of the Parliament or people, have fettered the exertions of adminiſtration, and diſappointed their projects?"

He then produced calculations by which it appeared, that the ordnance ſervice for the year 1779, the navy debt, the extraordinaries of the army, and every other ſpecies of public expence, exceeded the the moſt expenſive year of laſt war, by millions. That every article, civil as well as military, ſecret ſervice, embaſſies, governors bills, and preſents to indians were augmented in the ſame proportion; that a legion of monſters, conſiſting of places and appointments never heard of before, had ſtarted up of late; " all conſpiring to ſhew the equal ſuperintendence of the Miniſter over his works, and to pillage an exhauſted nation." He ſtated the miſerable condition of Ireland, ſacrificed alike to private rapacity and public oppreſſion; their ruined commerce, empty treaſury, and national bankruptcy; and added, " if they had lately met with relief, we know how much they are indebted to the attention and humanity of adminiſtration." Theſe he ſaid were ſome of the circumſtances which have attended the year 1779; " you, gentlemen, can beſt determine, whether a war begun and carried on under theſe auſpices, is likely to terminate in the ſafety and advantage of this country; and whether if it muſt be continued, its proſecution ſhould be intruſted to thoſe who have given ſuch ſignal inſtances of incapacity. You will alſo determine, whether there are to be no bounds to profuſion on one ſide, or patience on the other; whether every

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private gentleman will ſubmit to become the ſteward of his own eſtate, and ſee like Tantalus the ſtreams of wealth flow through his hands, without ever daring to taſte." He added, " that France, our hereditary rival is making ample ſtrides towards freedom and better policy, under the auſpices of a monarch who nobly ſets bounds to his own authority, improves the finances without adding to the national burthens, and tears from the myſteries of deſpotiſm that veil with which they delight to be concealed.

If theſe are our only remaining conſolations, you will, perhaps, think our ſituation moſt alarming. It is ſo indeed; nor are we to ſeek our ſafety from that empiriciſm, which has hitherto made us inſenſible to our evils: it requires a ſkilful, but an honeſt hand, which will probe our wounds, before it attempts a cure. We are reduced to the very brink of deſpair, nor is there a gleam of hope, except from the riſing ſpirit of the people, exaſperated by an unexampled ſeries of provocations and diſgraces. Are we then ſo tame, ſo fallen, ſo abject, that we have reſigned our lives and properties to the diſpoſal of others, and dare not even demand an account of their deſtination? Are we merely ſheep fattened for the profit, and ſlaughtered at the pleaſure of our maſters? Gentlemen, if we are to bear the increaſing burthens of a war, begun with ambition, and carried on with every ſpecies of miſmanagement, nothing can be more reaſonable, than that the exceſſive ſums levied upon the people, ſhould be applied with the ſtricteſt integrity; nothing more juſt, than that thoſe who have plunged us into this abyſs, ſhould ſhare its calamities? What! at a time when every private Gentleman in this kingdom finds his property crumbling away beneath his

his graſp, when every merchant and manufacturer feels himſelf involved in a moſt inextricable diſtreſs, ſhall there be a privileged ſet of men, who riot with impunity on your ſpoils, and know no other care than to add to your already intolerable burthens? The object, therefore, of our petition is juſt as it is conſtitutional; and if ever there was a time, which called upon every independent man to ſpeak his ſentiments, it is the preſent. Let us, therefore, proceed with a cautious firmneſs; let our conduct be worthy of that nation, which lately ſhone the foremoſt in the univerſe for power, riches, and freedom; worthy of that tribunal, of that laſt tribunal which is appealed to for the preſervation of our country: and in that word is every tie, every duty, every relation ſummed up. Allegiance to princes, obedience to governments, attachment to particular perſons or families, are but ſubordinate ſtreams from that vaſt comprehenſive ſource; he that pays implicit deferance to any other name, he that worſhips at any other alter, may with an honeſt heart, and a miſtaken piety, commit the groſſeſt idolatry; while he that acknowledges no principle but this, and acts from it with an enlightned zeal, can never err. Let me, therefore, conjure you, gentlemen, all that are here aſſembled, all that may hereafter join us in this great cauſe, to act like men that are managing the moſt important ſtake: not acting for themſelves alone, but from whom the lateſt poſterity will expect the ſafe tranſmiſſion of its rights. Let no inferior, no ſubordinate cauſe, divert you from this great end; let neither fear, nor intereſt, nor pleaſure warp your attention from the noble objects which now riſe before your view? Conſider this day, not as the goal, but as the beginning of your career; the hour, on which, like

Brutus,

Brutus, you have devoted yourſelves to the ſervice of your country; which rouzes you from your lethargy, and lifts you to your former rank in the creation, the auſpicious hour that reſtores your country, by your means, to all the glories ſhe has loſt.